THE ABSTRACT

ISSUE #1: AN INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first issue of

THE ABSTRACT!

Here you'll find a brief compilation of anything art related, including (but not limited to) artist recommendations, books, and also your own work!

OLIVIA JIN: CHIEF EDITOR

DRAWN BY MIKA

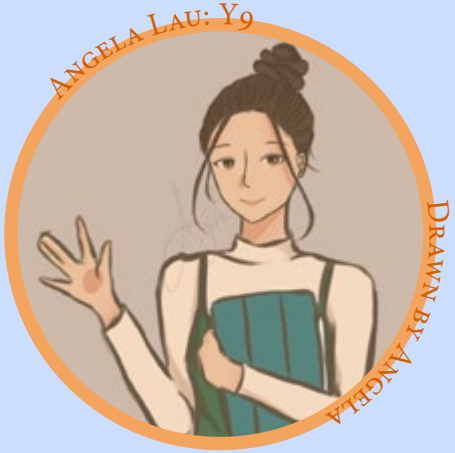
MIKA TSE: CREATIVE EDITOR

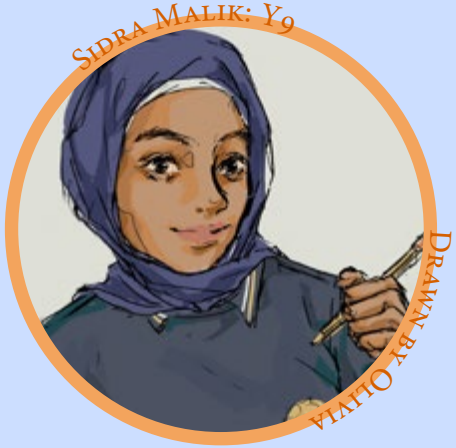
DRAWN BY OLIVIA

We hope you can find new artistic inspiration here and feel encouraged to explore your creative side out of school!

2021/04/20

Meet our lovely team of writers!





What's inside?

- Editor's favourites
- A brief guide to animation
- An artistic history of mermaids
- Discover new artists
- Featured writers in the advice corner
- Which famous female artist are you?

... and more!

Walking On The Clouds
Of Heaven
Oil on Board

Tyrone Geter

Blinded by the Light
Conte Charcoal

This is a young painter and illustrator in America who often reflects upon African American heritage in his art. On Geter's website tyronegeter.com the emotional side of the art is explained as the artist reveals that he rarely sketches out art beforehand but instead listens to the voice in the back of his head for inspiration. Geter has illustrated in children's books to celebrate African American children as well as other writings. Here are some highlights of Geter's work...

Rahaf

Metamorphosis: Spirits
#3 Charcoal on Paper

Traditional Illustrators with Bright Styles

(on instagram)

@boniroom

Boniroom is an oil pastel illustrator who draws beautiful scenery and still life. She uses neutral tones for backgrounds and bright tones for the main drawing which creates a lively effect.

@draa_doodles

Draa_doodles aka Jennee .Y uses color pencils and water colors to draw stunning characters with a calm effect. Her drawings aren't necessarily realistic but the colors she uses work really well together.

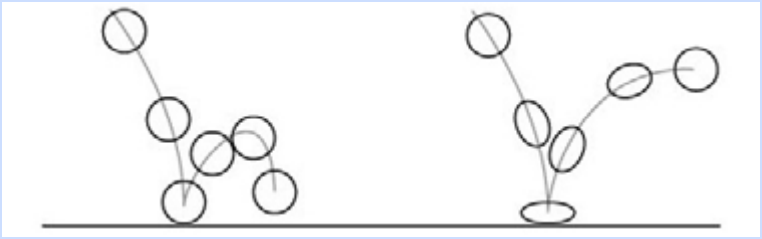
@maruti_bitamin

Maruti Bitamin is a watercolor illustrator that also draws characters but has a very different style to Jennee .Y. Maruti has a lot more fictional style and draws things like girls with wings as ears. Her color scheme is extremely bright and also slightly neon.

Angela

THE 12 PRINCIPLES OF ANIMATION

This year, I taught myself how to animate. To animate in a decently engaging manner I used something called the 12 principles of animation, which were created by two legendary animators, Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston. These are the basics to making your sequence interesting and pleasing to watch, so buckle in, and let me explain.



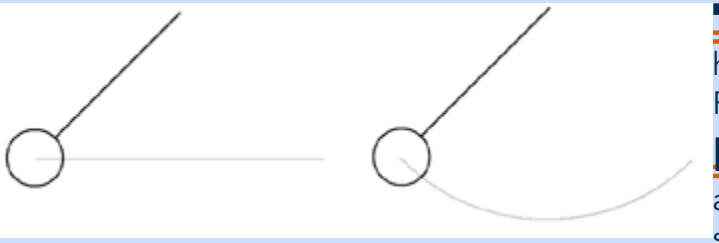
The first principle is called squash and stretch. This is the idea that animated objects will get longer and flatter to emphasise their speed, momentum and weight. Take the ball to the right, for example. Without changing the shape of the object the animation appears stiff and lifeless, but with squash and stretch we can also see the consistency of the ball. This applies to the movement of characters too.

The next principle is anticipation. This is when a character gives a sign that they are going to do something before actually doing it. It's to make sure that the audience doesn't miss anything. For example, when a character reaches into their pocket they could raise their hand in anticipation so that the viewer doesn't miss the movement and wonder where the object they took out came from. Anticipation can also be used to give an element of surprise, for example: make the viewer expect something, and then have something else completely different happen.

Staging is the third principle, and possibly the most important. It is the presentation of an idea so that it is completely and unmistakably clear. It is used to guide the viewer's eye to exactly the right place at the right time to avoid confusion and has a lot to do with where things are placed on the screen, the camera angle, how long text is shown (long enough to be read three times). But it's not just about controlling the audience's eyes, it's about conveying ideas. If a character is sad, make them sadder; if a house is run down, remove any objects that could distract from that concept.

Next up, straight ahead or pose to pose. This term describes two ways to animate movement. Pose to pose is when you draw the poses you want the character to achieve first and then animate between. It makes sure that you end where you want to and is usually praised for being solid and clear. Straight ahead however is animation frame by frame, and is more spontaneous and free flowing. Both have benefits but whichever you choose can greatly impact the mood of the movement.

Now comes the technique of follow through and overlapping action. This about having body parts or appendages drag behind the main body and continue to move after the body has stopped. Follow through and overlapping action are often associated with another term called drag. These all describe the same thing but in different ways. Overlapping action is the offset between the main body and the movement of the other parts. Drag describes the technique of delaying the movement of the appendage. And follow through is the way the appendages continue to move after the body has stopped. Slow in and slow out. This refers to how all movements start slowly, build speed and finish slowly. It is very important to add this acceleration and deceleration because otherwise you lose a lot of realism.



The seventh principle is called arcs. Very few organisms are capable of having mechanical movement of in and out or up and down, instead movements happen in arcs. For example, the ball to the left.

Next is secondary action, which is usually associated with overlapping action, although, according to Frank and Ollie they are very different things. It describes gestures that support the main action and add more dimension to the character animation. For example a character could be walking angrily. The primary action here is the legs walking, and the secondary action is things like his swinging fisted arms, his bobbing head and facial expression.

Number nine is timing. This principle states that the personality and nature of an animation is greatly affected by the number of frames inserted between each main action. Basically if you have many drawings set close together the action would be very slow, and if you have few drawings the action will be very fast. This can be used to convey much about what is happening because speed is crucial when conveying actions.

The tenth principle is exaggeration. This one's more self explanatory. Every action and pose can be increased to the next level to impact the viewer. Exaggeration doesn't mean distortion, it just means more convincing. It's important for the viewer to know exactly how a character is feeling when their face is shown on screen,especially if there is not speech or music. When motions are quick the exaggeration is even more important, so that things are noticed, similar to staging.

The penultimate principle is called solid drawing and it's about making sure forms feel like they are in three dimensional space by using volume, weight and balance. This is a lot about perspective drawing and knowing how to draw a character from all sides. When constructing a character, use 3D shapes like spheres cubes and pyramids instead of circles, squares and triangles, and to be mindful about the space you're animating in, you could always draw perspective lines on the floor. Also use clothing to your advantage, create wrinkles and overlap so not everything looks like it's in the same plane.

And the last principle of animation is called appeal! This is actually the most fun one. It's the idea that there always has to be something about a character that intrigues the audience. They have to be interesting and engaging. This doesn't mean beautiful or over detailed, it just means that all things should have some sort of charismatic aspect to them, or relatability. Here's some ways to make your characters appealing. Use a variety of shapes. Try out all sorts of forms to add variety and interest. Secondly, play with proportions. Magnify the things you want people to take note of, or that are more interesting and reduce the boring parts. But remember, thirdly, to keep it simple. Too much information can overcomplicate a design and that loses appeal in an animation where screen time is limited or brief.

And that's it. You made it to the end. I hope you enjoyed reading and that some of this will prove useful in the far or near future. But for now, I'll leave you in peace, with one last thing: The most important part of animation is finding your own style. Explore everything, get a vibe, and don't be too fixed on one idea. Eventually, through enough experimentation, practice and looking at others work, you'll find your footing... Good luck!

Lara

Tillie Walden

Tillie Walden is an American cartoonist and illustrator. She started out by posting her art and comics on her website, and was then discovered by Avery Hill Publishing, who asked her to create a graphic novel. Initially she declined, but went on to say yes a year later. The graphic novel she created is called ***The End of Summer***, and features a giant cat called ***Nemo***, among other things. It was published in 2015 and went on to win her the ***Ignatz award*** for outstanding artist. Since then, she's published various other graphic novels, perhaps most notably ***Spinning*** (2017), ***On A Sunbeam*** (2018) and ***Are You Listening?*** (2019). Her art is influenced by the manga she read in her youth, especially that of Yoshihiro Tagashi. Along with this, her graphic novels are influenced by the art and storytelling of Studio Ghibli films, and graphic memoirs such as Alison Bechdel's ***Fun Home***, Craig Thompson's ***Blankets*** and David Small's ***Stitches***.

Ester

At School

Sketchbook #9

Little

EDITOR'S FAVOURITES!

The Art of Posuka Demizu

- POSUKA DEMIZU

This artbook is a collection of Posuka Demizu's work, a manga artist (who you may know as the co-author of *The Promised Neverland*!). I love her sketchy, linear drawing style combined with vibrant colours and lively characters. I bought it recently - the print quality is very high - and love to flick through for inspiration, particularly with composition, colours and perspective, all of which are extremely atmospheric and engaging. Anyone who admires the work of manga artists (like me!) would be highly inspired by *The Art of Posuka Demizu.*

Purchase at Blackwells here

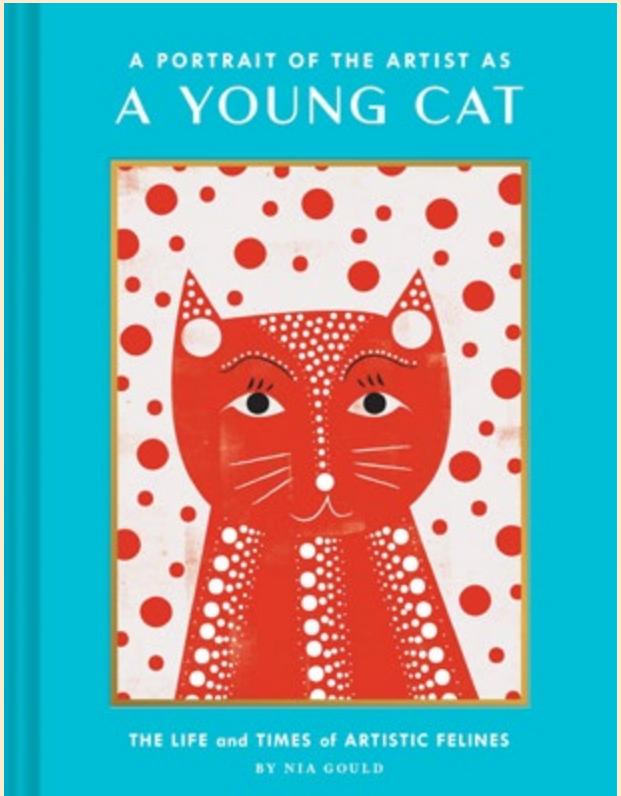
Olivia recommends...

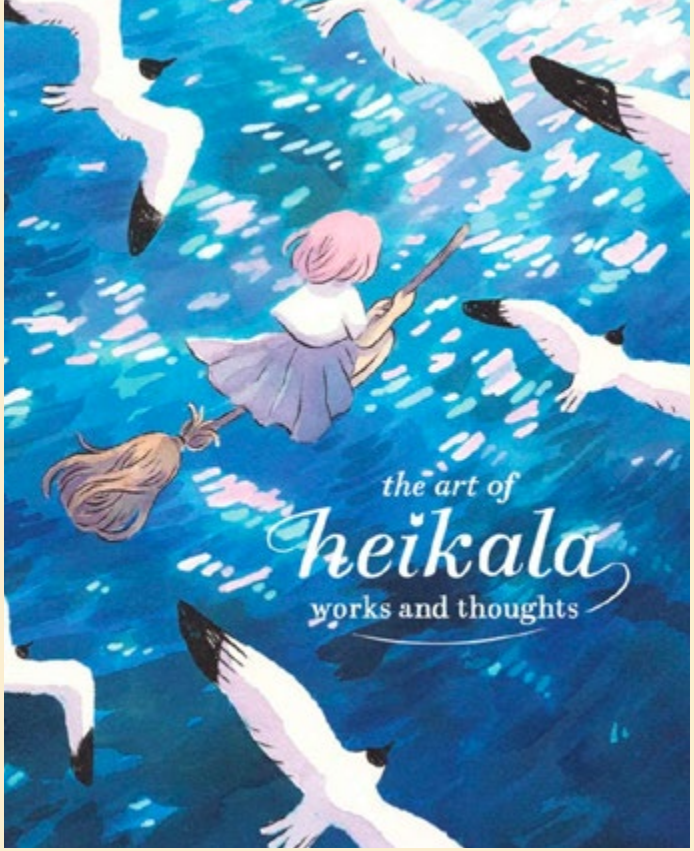
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Cat

- NIA GOULD

I discovered her work on Etsy before finding her other social media, and adore the cute cat motifs in all her art. Her book, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Cat*, is a playful take on reimagining famed artists as felines - it's both imaginative and informative, and I'm sure any cat lover would appreciate the many cat puns littered throughout. Nia Gould also sells plenty of other cat paraphernalia on her Etsy shop, so please support her there!

Purchase at Etsy here





The Art of Heikala Works and Thoughts

- HEIKALA

I first came across Heikala on Instagram and have continued to be in love with her whimsical, narrative scenes. Influenced by Finnish children's books and Japanese animation, she is a Finnish illustrator who uses a mixture of inks and watercolours. The attention to detail in the setting and tones create a distinct atmosphere which immerse the viewer into her world. Her book lets you in on how she does it, so if you're interested check out her work:)

Purchase at Blackwells here

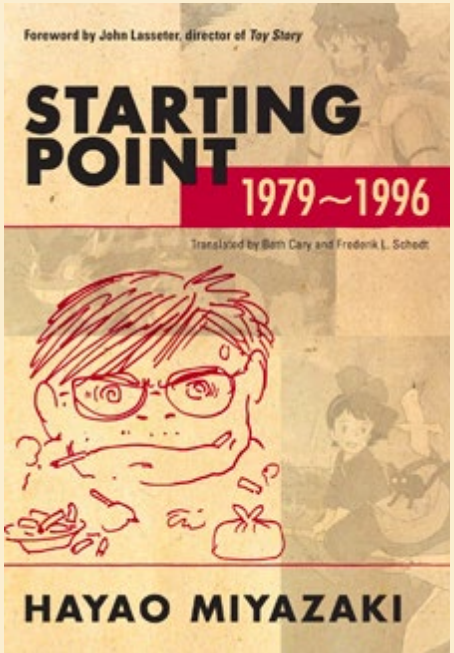
Mika recommends...

Starting Point: 1979–1996

- HAYAO MIYAZAKI

I looked more into Miyazaki after having been a huge fan of Studio Ghibli's films from childhood. This book is a really indepth insight from Miyazaki on his works, his methods, and the animation industry in both the East and West. It includes sections of various interviews, film reviews and talks he has given whilst also showing his planning notes and initial concepts for his films. Whilst it's a long one, it was so inspiring to read from such a respected and experienced director, and it helped me understand how images can be transformed into a story. This only documents the first part of his incredible career and I would highly recommend giving it a read!

Purchase at Blackwells here



Scene from 'Totoro'

Scene from 'Mary and the Witch's Flower'

Kazuo Oga

Kazuo Oga was born on February 29th 1952, in Akita Prefecture, Japan. He is known for his work as art director for Studio Ghibli films such as ***Kiki's Delivery Service***, ***Spirited Away*** and ***Howl's Moving Castle***. But he has also made huge contributions to background painting and setting illustration across many anime films. His most iconic and also my favourite work of his is Totoro's forest from ***My Neighbor Totoro***. For his work in this, he used poster-color paints and only two brushes, hira-fude (flat brush) and sakuyo-fude (pointed brush) as he believed this to be the most cheap and convenient way. His works were created through painting off his own memories and moods, which would create different shapes and images depending on his emotions at the time. I love the mystical beauty he created in Totoro's forest, the magical setting constructed through bright and vibrant colour set the perfect atmosphere for the movie, which has inspired many artists who have worked on Studio Ghibli and Madhouse Studio films since. In Japan, he is widely celebrated artist. The Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo even created an exhibit in 2007 entitled "***The One Who Painted Totoro's Garden***."

Lili

Georgia on Life Drawing

Monica Hernandez

Nadia Waheed

Hiba Schahbaz

Life drawing, also known as figure or gesture drawing, is the practice of drawing the human form. During the lockdowns, like many others across the country I joined a 'virtual' life drawing class as its popularity grew. Drawing life not only plays a role in the development of art and observation skills and gives anatomy and insight to the human body, but it is also an opportunity to interact closely with people in a time where this is rare, and it is a privilege to be shown someone's vulnerability. Right now there are a range of classes available, most are led over zoom, (I joined @drawn.chorus on instagram) which is actually a real advantage for beginners as being at home can give you more confidence. There are also resources on the RA (Royal Academy of Art) website where there are numerous clips from their live streamed life drawing sessions.

Life drawing and painting women has been a way of reclaiming the male gaze and celebrates bodies of all shapes, colours and sizes. Monica Hernandez, Hiba Schahbaz and Nadia Waheed are all examples of contemporary artists whose work brings diversity and power back to the female nude.

Georgia's work

Which famous female artist are you?

Sidra

Which word best describes you?

A. Crazy B. Wise C. Powerful D. Kind

Which kind of art do you prefer?

A. Pop Art B. Collages C. Self portraits D. Impressionism

Which one of these is most important to you?

A. To show things the way you see it B. To include everyone
C. To be understood D. To observe carefully

Which quote stands out to you?

A. I think I will be able to, in the end, rise above the clouds and climb the stairs to Heaven, and I will look down on my beautiful life. B. The silhouette says a lot with very little information, but that's also what the stereotype does. C. Feet, what do I need you for when I have wings to fly? D. Women should be someone and not something

What food do you like?

A. Pumpkins B. Sugary things C.Watermelon D.Breakfast foods

Mostly A:

Yayoi Kusama

Unique, Confident, Determined

Mostly B:

Kara Walker

Wise, Direct, Full of Ideas

Mostly C:

Frida Khalo

Powerful, Independent, Ambitous

Mostly D:

Mary Casatt

Observant, Kind, Friendly

Commentaries on Art History

Baroque classicism spanned from 1601-1700, bringing a new stage of classical Renaissance art with more dramatic, complex features being prioritised over harmonious and balanced proportions. Many paintings were based on scenes in Ancient Greek and Roman literature, including many myths and tales.

There was a desire to showcase accurate knowledge of human figures, pose and architecture, as realism grew popular. Many artists looked to myth to present this; epic stories provided scenes full of action packed movement. Through sculpure, a desire to explore human anatomy and form rose. By using classical myth as the subject, artists were able to portray and pursue this interest in their work, adding additional features to make the sculptures more ethereal and mythical (i.e, intricate hair designs and loose, revealing clothing). In Western civilisation of that time, divine stories could only be found in classical mythology, so if an artist wished to include them into their work, it was definite they would turn to the myths of Romans and Greeks to find it.

Eva

Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Apollo and Daphne 1625

Simon Vouet, Saturn, Conquered by Amor, Venus and Hope 1646

Frederick Leighton, The Fisherman and the Siren 1858

John William Waterhouse, A Mermaid 1900

Edvard Eriksen, The Little Mermaid 1913

Mermaids often feature in early maps from the 16th centuary onward, together with sea monsters and other mythical creatures. They are frequently shown on the edges of the known world and convey a sense of 'allure' and untamed female power. Depictions of mermaids can be seen throughout Western European artwork, with the earliest depiction being traced back to a Norman chapel in Durham Castle. Typically, mermaid figures were seen as 'temptresses' and had a sinister power.

Frederick Leighton's ***The Fisherman and the Siren*** tells the story of a mermaid who lures a fisherman to his death, as revenge for him catching and killing her fish. The mermaid here represents the 'seductive and destructive power of female sexuality.' The mermaid's feminine power continues to be evident in the 19th century, shown through John William Waterhouse's *A Mermaid*. Mermaids transitioned from symbols of myth to representations of ideal feminine beauty. His other works similarly depict women in an idealised form. Waterhouse continues the tradition of depicting women as an alluring trap. Mermaids in the modern day have evolved somewhat from this stereotype. Perhaps the most famous example is the Little Mermaid Statue in Copenhagen. This references Hans Christian Anderson's tale, later animated by Disney, which made the mermaid less two dimensional. Even so, the 'mermaid trope' continues to endure - can we still see elements of this narrative pervading in the present way young women are depicted?

Anna

Amy Leung Y13 says...

Art during lockdown

"For some context, I spent the second half of year 12 and a big part of year 13 in lockdown working on 2 creative A-levels, Art and Textiles. As you can imagine this was a huge challenge for practicalities and motivation. Working at home with no separate studio space was extremely restrictive and especially difficult in such expressive subjects. Thankfully, these challenges did not go unnoticed; we collected materials, had in-studio days and worked on calls alongside classmates. Constantly keeping in live contact made the process a lot easier. It was uplifting to see everyone bring the same energy from the studio onto our calls.

Despite some major hiccups, working at home encouraged me to try different mediums and branch out from my normal analog process at school; I managed to experiment with collage, digital art and work more on life drawing by joining online sessions. Creating art in lockdown caused a major lifestyle change, which in turn prompted an attitude change. I really enjoyed putting more time into mediums I didn't usually work with which ended up benefiting my structure and process of working as I began to think more openly."

Advice for motivation

Motivation was my biggest struggle working at home. As a creative student, most of us are not built for repetitive cycles. Finding new inspiration was a huge challenge, which is when I used my own experiences during this time as a starting point. Paths exploring emotional health and mentality were in abundance, so I moved my project towards emotional concepts and feelings during lockdown which were extremely relevant. My best advice if you're feeling like you lack motivation, is to revert back to what you love. Why were you initially drawn to art? What made you pick your project title? Working extensively through a project, especially A-Levels sometimes takes you too far from when art was just a hobby. I hadn't touched pastel since year 5 and now it's one of my favourite mediums, thanks to lockdown and limited resources.

Advice Corner: Creating in Lockdown

Zahra Badawi Y13 says...

Coping with art in lockdown

"Over the periods of the three lockdowns, I was exposed to the new experience of coping with carrying on my Textiles and Arts A levels from home. One big aspect of working from home for these long spans of time were the limited creative supplies and minimal workspaces, as basics like paint became absent. Due to this I felt I wasn't doing as much work as I could have done at the time. This led to the highlight of every lockdown - the multiple trips to and from school to collect some supplies. Though through this, I built on my resourcefulness with materials and developed other practical skills. I found I was focusing and building on one skill within both art and textiles, for example: in Art my oil paint skills greatly developed, and within textiles my time management matured and this became very useful when I returned to school. There was also the situation of not having the usual studio space and I ended turning my household into a bomb site of fabric scraps, paint and the lingering smell of oil paint. The result being my poor family coping with the mess for months, especially with the most recent lockdown where I was working on my Art and Textile huge mock projects. Not physically being at school also meant I wasn't exposed to the usual high creative atmosphere and inspiring ideas from my classmates. Though if needed a second opinion on my work, my friends were only a call or message away."

What kept me motivated were my friends, the aspect of being able to contact the teachers at any time with any questions and the enjoyment I had in the topics I'm looking at in both of my arts - 'Childhood Memories' and 'Gardens'. Overall it was an experience and a half and the advice I would give, in any difficult situation, is you just have to keep pushing to the end as it will all be worthwhile.

I'm sure that we have all realised the struggles of working as a creative during covid. Join #artisessential to express support for artists out there!

Thank you for reading the first issue of ...

THE ABSTRACT!

Email me at o.jin@oxf.gdst.net to submit your art to be featured in the next issue of ***THE ABSTRACT****!*

Mika Tse: Creative Editor

Olivia Jin: Chief Editor

Special thanks to ***AMY*** *&* ***ZAHRA*** *(y13) for featuring in this issue <3*

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